

Circular Letter No. 32

October 23, 1911.

To Supervising Principals:

Gentlemen:

In order that the work which we expect to have done in the night schools which open today may be more uniform and efficient, the following suggestions are given:

Unless there is some good reason to the contrary, the following subjects are to be taught in each night school: Arithmetic, Spanish, English, Writing, Hygiene, Geography, and History and Civics.

Assuming that there are two groups in each night school, each group should receive a fifteen minute class in Arithmetic, in Spanish and English. Fifteen minutes should be devoted to a general class in writing. A five minute period at the end of the first hour should be given to relaxation. During the last ten minutes of the session the teacher should give a talk on Hygiene, based on Ames' "Hygiene for the Tropics," in the hands of the teacher, three nights each week; a talk on Geography one night, and one on History and Civics the remaining night.

In Arithmetic the four fundamental processes should be taught largely by oral drills, giving special emphasis where the pupils seem to be weak. Generally speaking, the pupils enrolled in our night schools will be found to be

quick at figures. Do not permit long drawn-out analyses, and in this subject, as well as in the others, remember that those methods which are suitable for the immature pupils in the day schools may not be suitable for the more mature pupils in the night schools.

In Spanish a book should be placed in the hands of the pupils at once. Do not use the chart. Employ the word in syllabic method and have the pupils begin reading as soon as possible. If they can finish the "Cartilla" let them do so, and then go on to the next book. In all subjects see that the class progresses as fast as the ability of the pupils will permit.

In English the word method should be employed, using common terms, and the sentence method should be taken up as soon as possible. In these schools the teacher can translate from one language to the other. Have the work made eminently practical, giving the pupils a stock of phrases which they can use in their daily work. The teacher should have a copy of the "Lord's Lessons in English" at hand to serve as a guide.

In writing, each pupil should be furnished with a writing book from the start and allowed to take this book home. Care should be taken to show the pupils how to hold the pencil or the pen, and large writing should be insisted upon.

Most of the pupils come to the schools with their hand muscle tired and cramped after a hard day's work, and this makes the use of large letters all the more important. Instruct your teachers to teach the arm movements but not the finger. The black-board should be used freely in all work, but particularly in practicing writing. Insist on the pupils copying from the models in the writing book.

The general talks to be given during the last ten minutes of each session should be within the reach of the pupils. See that the teacher gives the reasons for the hygienic rules which he teaches, and that he takes a few minutes to have the class tell what was discussed the night before. In Geography the teacher should give general ideas with a view to widening the horizon of the pupils, but keeping constantly in view the commercial and industrial aspects of the subject.

In the discussions in History and Civics, politics must be avoided, and sound ideas on democratic government inculcated in a practical way. All these talks should be made interesting, and careful preparation on the part of the teacher should be required. Check any attempt on the part of the teachers to make a display of their erudition. Each pupil should be furnished with a composition book

for his work and be allowed to take it home. In your visits notice if there are pupils in the night schools who should be in the day schools, and, if possible, have them transferred.

Respectfully,

Acting Commissioner of Education

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